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YouTube

By James L. Paris

I thought we would spend some time in this edition of the newsletter talking about YouTube (www.youtube.com). In the interest of full disclosure, I will tell you that I have not done a lot, historically, with YouTube. There is no great reason for that, other than the fact there are just so many hours in a day. When you're doing all of the different things that I'm doing in the course of my roles here, you simply cannot get to everything.

That said, beginning about a year and a half ago, I started actually doing more in the way of creating videos for YouTube. As I have dabbled in the arena, I have also spent a lot of time simply learning about YouTube, and one of the most significant things I've learned is that, despite the popular perception, it's not just a forum for broadcasting videos of laughing babies and other silly sorts of things that, while admittedly amusing, ascribe a triviality to YouTube that does not really have to exist. One of the things that helped me a lot in learning how to use YouTube as a marketing tool was to become a *user* of YouTube. In other words, I would spend time going to YouTube to do a search, instead of going to Google to do the search. So, as an example, if I'm doing some research for an article I'm writing, I might go to YouTube to do the search for information instead of to a more typical search engine like Google. What I found when I began doing this was a lot of really good, useful information, and just as importantly for someone

considering making the upload of videos to YouTube a more significant part of his marketing, I was introduced to the whole side of YouTube that's about the imparting of quality information in a professional manner.

One of the things I immediately noticed about the more sedate, how-to kinds of videos at YouTube is that they are usually configured in little more than a "talking head" sort of format. In other words, the video is no more involved than a person, from the shoulders up, sitting in front of a camera and explaining how to do something. It's very easy to make this kind of video, on two fronts: First, you need nothing more complex for equipment than a camera that basically clips right on to your computer and can record you talking as you're sitting in the chair at your workstation. Second, in terms of what's going on in front of the camera, it's just someone sitting and talking. There is no acting required, there are no props required, there are no additional people required; it's all very simple.

One of the mistakes that a lot of people will make at the outset is to give in to the perception that in order to do effective video, you have to go out and buy an expensive camera, maybe even buy a backdrop, and otherwise spend a lot of money and effort putting together a real production. That's just not the case. The vast majority of videos, which are perfectly well-received, involve nothing

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more than someone sitting at a computer, in front of a webcam connected to the computer, and recording a video. Beyond being perfectly effective, it's also a very easy thing to do.

I've decided for the purposes of this article that I'm not going to get into the process of *how* to record a video. The reason? It's just so easy to do, and I decided that the space here could be better spent on other things. If you set up a YouTube account, you're going to be able to figure it out in five minutes. That said, I DO want to discuss why you should use YouTube in the first place, as well as some simple ideas and strategies that you want to consider when using YouTube.

OK. Let's say you're being harassed by a collection agency, and you want to find out how to bring the collection calls to an end. One way you might get started is to do a Google search for the phrase, "how to stop collection calls." Now, note that "How To Stop Collection Calls" happens to be the name of one of *my* YouTube videos. You will find that, currently, my video will come back as a search result on the first or second page of the Google results returned. More important than that simple fact is *how* the search result of my video is portrayed on the Google search results pages. You will notice that YouTube videos that are returned as search results in Google really stand out among the rest of the results offerings. This is because Google configures the YouTube videos returned in such a way that sample images of the videos are a part of the search results themselves. That is, while the rest of the search results are in the form of text, the YouTube videos that come back do so principally as *images*, with some associated text. Now, I don't care who you are...when your



Be honest: a lot of you are excited at the prospect of your Internet marketing success liberating you from bosses like this.

eye takes notice of one or two images in the midst of a sea of text, you will immediately focus on those images and ignore everything else, at least for the moment.

I think it was a little over a year ago that Google began including YouTube videos in the search results, and when you see the videos returned as results on the pages, you'll notice that Google allows for a relatively large chunk of space to be allocated to the YouTube video results returned. That said, note that not every video is going to enjoy that sort of "highlighted" search result, and there's no definable way to know what gets a video in the search results; I imagine it has a lot to do with how many views it has historically had and things like that, but I think you have a pretty good chance of seeing your YouTube video come up in Google search results if you name your video properly. This brings us back to the all-important subject of keyword phrases; if your video is about how to lose weight, then you would want to title your video in the same way. Again, regardless of what you're putting out there for capture...you want to be sure that

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you're following all of the important rules related to keyword phrasing.

Now, at this point, many of you might be wondering, "Well this all sounds fine, but how can I use YouTube with *my* topic?" Well, because of the way you will usually be assembling your video...that is, with you simply speaking into a camera...there really is no topic that does not lend itself to being the subject of a YouTube video. Remember that the written word, the audio file, and the video file are simply different means by which to disseminate information. If you're struggling with this issue, it may be because you're still thinking that a video has to be some sort of contrived production beyond simply a person looking into a camera and speaking—well, it doesn't, and what's more, that would be a risky type of video to produce if your ultimate goal is to simply put out information; unless you have some real experience producing anything remotely clever on video, your best bet is to keep things very straightforward. Otherwise, you run the risk of having a video that is indeed popular...but for all of the wrong reasons.

In the end, a video can be as simple as a graphic version of your most recent article. You could even go as far as to simply "read" your article into the camera, although I wouldn't suggest being quite that simplistic. Rather, you could do a video that paraphrases the article, and perhaps includes some other points that the article doesn't cover. I happen to like that approach, because you can then invite the viewers of your video to read your article for more information, while inviting your article readers to refer to your video for "further insight," or something along those lines. That is, you can develop a nice symbiosis between the

two mechanisms for your benefit.

One other thing I want to mention at this point is that it turns out that YouTube, behind Google and Facebook, is the third most-frequently searched location for people doing Internet searches of any kind. When you think through what a "visual" sort of society we have become, this information is not all that surprising. Now, speaking for myself, I much prefer to read information rather than take it in via the video or audio format, but that's me. Part of what I have had to overcome in my Internet marketing businesses is precisely my own personal biases in this regard—that is, because I personally prefer to *read* information, I historically gave little thought to putting out videos as a means to supplying information to the public. So, if we know that right behind Facebook and Google in search engine popularity is YouTube, and then we also know that YouTube is essentially included *in* Google, it really makes sense that we should be including some videos in our overall search-related marketing.

Of course, one of the nice things about a video is that not only can you upload it to YouTube, but you can, of course, put it directly on to your own website. Speaking for myself, I can tell you that when I visit someone's website and I see a video on the homepage, for example, I am much more quickly drawn into that person and his business than I might be otherwise. Again, what are these videos, for the most part? Well, they're "talking heads." This means that when I see these videos on a website I'm visiting, it feels like the website owner is sitting there and talking directly to me, even if I know intellectually that he is not. Text is great, of course, and it will likely still represent the

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bulk of how you put forth information, but the benefits of having videos as marketing and information dissemination mechanisms are far too valuable to ignore. In fact, I would set as a first goal, if you've not done so already, to get your first video up on YouTube.

Basic Elements of a YouTube Video

OK. You've decided to record your YouTube video. One of the things you're going to have to decide on at the outset is your user name at YouTube. Now, I personally fall into a bit of an unusual situation here, in that my name, James Paris, happens to be a fairly well-known name. For me, it makes sense to select a username that is basically the exact same name for which I'm known publicly. That said, for most of you, I would think of selecting your username maybe less in terms of using your own real name, and more in terms of selecting a handle. For example, if you're someone who shares information about how to get out of debt, maybe you could be something like the *DebtDiva*—see what I'm saying? This is actually kind of important, because when people review YouTube search results, they will frequently look at the usernames in order to see if they can quickly get an idea that you make the kind of videos they want to see.

Next, pay attention to the title you give to your video(s). Using the example of my video "How to Stop Collection Calls," it's pretty obvious that one big reason as to why I've had so many views of that particular piece is because the title actually mirrors the search phrase that many with collection issues are using to perform Internet searches. Keep that sort of thing in mind. I always go back to this, but it bears repeating: Do not

get clever about any of the key searchable aspects of the content you post on the Internet. Domain names, titles, phrases, etc., should all be comprised of the very words that you believe people will be using to find more information about a topic. I could have tried to be a little clever and called my video, "How to get the Peace and Quiet Back in Your Home." The problem is, would people specifically interested in how to stop collection calls find that video? They might...but not as easily. Remember that the shortest distance between two point will always be a straight line.

OK...you will have a couple of settings associated with your YouTube videos that you want to be sure are configured the right way. First, you want to take care that the video is "public." That will be the default setting anyway, so you shouldn't have to do anything with it. Obviously, you want the video to be available for viewing by everyone, which is what that means. A second default setting that you want to keep is that the video can be "shared." This setting allows others to embed the html code on their web pages and show your video. Now, I have to tell you that I'm surprised at how many people have the alternate setting on their videos that disallow them from being shared. Honestly, I have no idea why anyone...especially an Internet marketer...would put out a video into the public domain in the first place but then restrict in any way the degree to which it can be viewed.

Next, you have to create a description, or summary, of your YouTube video. The section for the description sits just below the video itself, and you are given the use of up to 500 characters to create your description. As with Twitter and other similar kinds of

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things that restrict on the basis of characters, a character is a letter or a space; basically a keystroke of any kind. That's not a ton of space that will allow you to write something comprehensive, but it's certainly enough to do a solid summary of what your video is about. As with everything else, you want to be sure that your YouTube video summary is filled with the appropriate keywords and keyword phrases.

Something else about the summary section that's good to know is that you can put an active link there; if you make sure to put the "http://" in front of the "www," the link will become *clickable* (and if you don't do that, it *will not* be a clickable link). Now, what's so cool about that is that as people watch your video and determine they have a residual interest in that topic, there's a link right there in front of them on which they can click to go directly to your website or blog. What's more, as we have talked about links moving you up in the search engines, this is an example of that.

From here, you will select your video's *category*. Most of what I do is appropriate for the "How to" category, and my guess is that many of your videos will be the same. Next, you will address the section called *Tags*. Tags are your keyword phrases, the ones you want associated with your video.

One thing I want to mention is that my video *How to Stop Collection Calls* generates probably about one email per day from someone who has seen it. Part of the reason for that is that in the video I offer something that a viewer can have for free: I offer a "cease communication" letter, which is a sample letter that people can use to get their creditors to stop calling them on the tele-

phone. I would encourage you to do this sort of thing in your videos, as well. I have spoken in the past about how it's a good idea to have small products that you can use as giveaways to help encourage traffic and particular interest in your website or blog. This is a great way to make an offer like that...directly, in the spoken word of your "talking head" video. In my case, whenever I hear from someone like that, it gives me the chance to meet a new person, make a new friend...and, of course, to bring a new person on board to my personal Internet marketing train; my email that I send to this person with the letter attachment will also contain a link to my Internet coaching sign-up opportunity, and other things, as well, so it's easy to see how putting out a YouTube video on the Internet like this can be another example of one thing leading to another, and another, and another.

Now...let's talk for a bit about how to handle the "Comments" section of your YouTube video. One of the problems with having a presence in the public domain...with a blog, video, anything...is that its simple existence

**Putting up quality videos on YouTube is
REALLY not this difficult.**



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invites attention of all kinds from all kinds of people. The chief problem with the anonymity available to blog respondents and other Internet posters is that they can usually say whatever they want...*whatever* they want...without repercussion. Just using my own video, “How to Stop Collection Calls,” as an example, I can tell you that I have had to go back through the “Comments” section there several times to delete comments where profane and other obscene kinds of language had been used. Unfortunately, this is how things are these days—the temptations offered by being able to have a public voice, cloaked in anonymity, is sometimes too much for some people to handle. Accordingly, you may see some outrageous comments posted to that section of your YouTube video. You are not obligated to go through and delete them, but the benefit of doing so, beyond the simple matter of preserving some measure of decency, is that genuine posters who have something of value to add to the “Comments” section will feel more encouraged to do so.

One last thing on the “Comments” section;” you have the option of disabling the comments, which means that no one can post a public comment to your video. As problematic as some comments can be, I would actually discourage you from doing that. The “Comments” section of a YouTube video can be a nice complement to the video itself, and a lot of visitors will be as interested in the back-and-forth that often takes place between those commenting as in the video itself. I tend to like to post things that have the capacity to be at least somewhat interactive, and the “Comments” section of a YouTube video allows for that. In the end, the traffic all points back to your video, and that is precisely what you want.

When you’re considering about what topic to make your YouTube video, you might find it helpful to go the home page of YouTube and see what is popular at the moment. There are several categories you can explore to that end at the YouTube site. Now, many of the videos...probably most of them...will be of little use to you, because a lot of them will have to do with something topical that is popular in the news right now; if your website is a “how to” site, there may not be much relevance for you in the topics that are most popular at YouTube at any given time, but if your website is, say, more of a general opinion site, you could make plenty of videos to post that tie into the most popular topics at the moment. That said, even if your website is *not* a general opinion site, you could well find a way to perhaps tie into some of the more popular current themes with your video. For example, at this writing, one of the most popular videos at YouTube is one geared to women on how to date safely. If your website is about human dynamics and/or relationships, for example, the fact that a current YouTube video on dating safely is so popular might prompt you to consider a related topic.

Kodak Zi8

The camera I use to make my videos is the Kodak Zi8. It’s described as a pocket video camera, and that’s exactly what it is. They sell for about \$150, and I happen to think the video quality from such a highly portable camera is terrific. In fact, while I’m thinking about it, let me mention something about the portability of the camera and your videos. You can still create a simple “talking head” sort of video, but make that a lot more interesting by perhaps shooting it from a park bench, or in some other location from your office. There’s absolutely nothing wrong

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with a classic “talking head” video that is shot from your home office, but when you can mix it up just a bit with different backdrops, that can be more appealing to the viewer than you might initially realize. In order to shoot from alternate locations, you might have to invest in a tripod, but a utilitarian tripod can be had for very little, maybe about \$25 or so, so it’s no great expense.

Let me mention two features, in particular, about this Kodak Zi8 that I really like. One, it has a USB connector that folds out for use; all you do, then, is simply plug the camera straight into your computer, and you can upload the video from the camera straight on to YouTube. The other feature I really like is the ability to connect an external microphone to the camera. Now, the reason you might want to use an external microphone is that if you do any recordings outside, you can sometimes run into sound quality issues. However, you can buy a lapel mike for very little...again, perhaps another \$20 or \$25...plug it into a jack that’s located on the side of the Zi8, and make clear, crisp audio recordings on behalf of your video. It will sound like you’re speaking right into the camera, even if the camera is five or six feet away from you.

Again, though, let me reiterate that in the beginning, you don’t have to buy any such camera with the accessories in order to do what we’re talking about in this article. The bottom line is that you can make a YouTube video to upload by sitting in front of your computer with a webcam.

This whole idea of video over the Internet is about to explode, so you absolutely want to get in on this and starting recording videos for upload. Google released something



called Google TV a few months ago, and what this does is it allows you to connect a box up to your TV set so that while you’re watching television, you can open up another little window on the side of your TV screen with your keyboard, and you can use Twitter, surf the Internet whatever; one of the things that is available is the ability for you to do live video chat, as well as record and upload to YouTube. So, with the advent of the opportunity where one person can sit on his couch and dial up a friend, and the two can engage in a video phone call, and where you can easily upload a video to YouTube, the general expectation of the consuming public on the Internet is going to be that you have videos...and probably a lot of videos...as a part of who you are and what you do as an Internet-based businessperson.

Visual Touches To Add to Your Video

One of the themes on which I’ve been harping throughout this issue is the idea that you don’t need to be anything more than a talking head to make an effective video, and that is absolutely true; just sitting and talking, or *standing* and talking, will be plenty enough “acting” on behalf of your goal of putting out

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a quality, useful video that will attract the viewers you're really seeking. That said, there may be modest little things you can do that don't really even count as acting or even much extra production that can make a big difference in the appeal of your video. For example, even something small like making the talking head video sitting at your desk with a full microphone headset, rather than, say, a lapel mike, can suggest to the viewer that perhaps you're a little more sophisticated, that maybe you do more sophisticated things and so your comments should be taken more seriously.

Let's move on with this theme and look at other examples. Let's say you're doing something with recipes—instead of sitting at your computer and describing something about a recipe or food preparation, make your video with you standing in the kitchen with your apron on. Even better, you could make the video of you actually preparing a dish and describing what you're doing as you go. Granted, this is not as simple as a talking head video, but neither is it really an example of acting or you otherwise doing something you normally would not do, because if your website is about cooking, then food preparation *is* what you normally do.

Let's think of some other examples. Bob Yetman, who many of you may know as my partner at Christian Money.com, is a well-credentialed fitness and self-defense professional. I don't believe he has a blog or website on his own that he maintains about fitness (I think he's probably busy enough with the stuff we do together), but if he did, he would absolutely want to make videos that show him using such places as health clubs, boxing rings, and karate dojos as video backdrops. Beyond that, he would probably want

to go a step further and make videos wherein he's demonstrating various exercises and techniques. Again, these would be a little more than simple talking head videos, but because they would still be no more than videos of him doing the things he naturally does as a fitness professional, they wouldn't require any extra acting or production on his part. Those are the kinds of things you can keep in mind when planning your videos.

All things considered, I cannot think of a good reason why someone would not take advantage of the opportunity to upload videos to YouTube. Other than the cost of a modest camera, it is free to make this happen. It just gives people one more way to find you; it gives you the chance to have another inbound link from a highly-ranked website back to your own. Additionally, you cannot underestimate the credibility that having several videos will grant to you and your site. Take two sites, similar in theme, and look at them side by side; let's say one person's site has five videos on YouTube, and has also reposted those YouTube videos on his own proprietary site...while the other site has no videos. What will your kneejerk reaction be with regard to the credibility of each site? Clearly, you will decide right away that the site with the YouTube videos is a bigger, more polished operation than the one without any videos.

Now, if you have any disinclination to making YouTube videos, it's probably related to the fact that the effort to make them, while not great, is still something extra—it requires more than just the usual sitting at the keyboard and typing away. However, remember that it is precisely that sort of extra effort that will separate you from your competition...and mean more sales; good luck!